

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR WINDSOR GARDENS SECONDARY COLLEGE

Conducted in November 2015



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Education
and Child Development

Review details

A priority for the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

The purpose of the External School Review is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools.

The overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

This External School Review has evaluated:

- *the school's self-review processes and findings,*
- *the school's achievement data and progress over time,*
- *the outcomes of the meetings and interviews with representatives from the school, and*
- *parent and student views about the school.*

The External School Review included an analysis of the school's key policies and procedures.

The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged.

This External School Review was conducted by Sue George-Duif, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Olivia O'Neil and Susan Hyde, Review Principals.

Policy compliance

The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are implemented and adhered to.

The Principal of Windsor Gardens Secondary College has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against a documented set of criteria. The school has implemented comprehensive tracking and intervention processes, and was found to be compliant with this policy. In 2014, the school reported attendance of 86.9%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Windsor Gardens Secondary College is a comprehensive secondary school catering for approximately 533 students, located in the north-eastern suburbs of South Australia. It was formerly known as Windsor Gardens Vocational College, and was the first vocational college to be established in the State. The school caters for a wide range of post-school pathways including university, further training or directly into employment.

The school has an ICSEA score of 928, and is classified as Category 3 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school population includes approximately 16% of students who identify as Aboriginal, 16% Students with Disabilities, 20% of students for whom English is an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), and approximately 50 students are enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program. Windsor Gardens Secondary College incorporates a Centre for the Hearing Impaired on the site, catering for approximately 22 students. Student cohort data reflects increased complexity and diversity. The college has the Wiltja senior students, Years 11 and 12, on-site, supported by the Wiltja staff, with students boarding at the Northfield residence.

The school's Executive Leadership Team consists of a Principal, in her first tenure at the school as Principal, and the following leaders:

Deputy Principal – Daily Organisation, Student Behaviour Management

Senior Leader – Curriculum and Innovation, Senior School

Senior Leader – Centre for the Hearing Impaired, Middle School

Business Manager.

Lines of inquiry

During the review process, the panel focused on three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

Student Learning:	How well are the students achieving over time?
Effective Leadership:	How successful is the school leadership in articulating the vision, values and strategic direction for the school? How well does the school leadership facilitate the development of a collaborative culture?
Improvement Agenda:	What is the extent and quality of data and information the school has about student achievement and growth and how effectively is it used?

How well are the students achieving over time?

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 41% of Year 9 students achieved the SEA.

- *This is an increase from 2014, where 31% of students achieved the SEA.*
- *The four-year average (2011 to 2014) for Year 9 students at Windsor Gardens Secondary School was 31.5%.*

There were 8 Year 9 students who achieved in the top two proficiency NAPLAN bands in Reading.

- *This compares to 1 of 84 students in 2014.*

Of the 18 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in Reading in Year 3, a total of 6 of these students, (6 out of 18) remain in the upper bands in Year 9, or 33%.

- *This compares to 0%, or none of the 11 students, remaining in the higher bands in 2014.*

Of the 11 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in Reading in Year 7, 6 of 11 (54.5%) students remain in the upper bands in Year 9.

- *This compares to 1 of 4 students in 2014.*

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 38% of Year 9 students achieved the SEA.

- *This is an increase from 2014, where 30% of students achieved the SEA.*
- *There is a four-year upward trend in Year 9 Numeracy from 17% to 38% (2011 to 2014).*
- *The four-year average (2011 to 2014) for Year 9 students at Windsor Gardens Secondary School was 26%.*

There were 3 of 99 Year 9 students who achieved in the top two proficiency NAPLAN bands in Numeracy.

- *This compares to 2 of 84 students for the previous year.*

Of the 11 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in Numeracy in Year 3, 2 of 11 (18%) students remain in the upper bands in Year 9.

- *This compares to 2 of 9 in 2014.*

Of the 4 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in Numeracy in Year 7, 3 of 4 (75%) students remain in the upper bands in Year 9.

- *This compares with 1 of 1 student in 2014.*

The school reports that it had put support mechanisms in place, in an attempt to improve achievement and growth in students' literacy and numeracy skills. An analysis of the PAT-R and PAT-M diagnostic testing indicates that there is growth in these areas. Staff in the Mathematics Learning Area have dissected the Numeracy NAPLAN test to ensure that the students have opportunities to build skills in the areas tested. Students are supported by the provision of mentoring, non-teaching staff assistance in class, and through online programs such as Quicksmart Maths.

In relation to the compulsory literacy requirement of the SACE in Stage One:

- 96.9% of students achieved a 'C' grade or above for an English subject.
- The percentage has trended upwards from 92.9% since 2012.

The percentage of grades that are above the SEA standard of a 'C' grade or better for the compulsory numeracy requirement at Stage One was 94%.

- The percentage has trended upwards from 2012, where 44.5% of students received a 'C' grade or above.

The percentage of grades that were at or above the SEA standard of 'C-' for attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects was 93%.

- Between 2011 and 2014, there was an average of 91%.

In 2014 the Stage Two, grade band distribution indicated that the majority of grades were in the 'C' band (53%), followed by the 'B' grades of 34%.

In 2014, the percentage of students completing the SACE as a percentage of potential completers is 86.7%.

- The percentage of students who completed SACE using VET was 61.5%.

How successful is the school leadership in articulating the vision, values and strategic direction for the school?

Windsor Gardens Secondary College has had a successful history of being a leader in the provision of Vocational Education in a secondary schooling setting. This was evidenced by the high number of students studying VET and by the comprehensive range of vocational courses offered. Over a 15-year period, the college developed approximately 100 partnership agreements with local businesses, industries and universities to provide work placements, links to further education, training and supportive university connections to provide first generation students with pathways to university. Student vocational learning was supported by extensive and purpose-built facilities including a large Building and Construction Shed, a Hospitality Café and industrial kitchen, a Multimedia Suite and sound studio, a Business Pathway Virtual Firm and a skilled Metal Technology area.

2015 marks the year of a change of direction at Windsor Gardens Secondary College. The Minister of Education approved a name change to Windsor Gardens Secondary College, to reflect the school's desire to project a more 'academic' image, and to ensure the sustainability of the school by increasing its enrolments.

It appears that there have been negative, unexpected consequences of policy decisions in relation to vocational funding arrangements with VET in Schools funding being removed, and the impact of five schools in close proximity to the school, including four private schools. The Principal and Business Manager reported that the school had approximately five permanent staff surplus to needs, and decreasing funds available to purchase laptops for staff and to maintain its extensive facilities. The financial sustainability of the school remains a significant concern for the Principal.

The school has experienced an enrolment decline, particularly in the senior years, where enrolments were boosted by students from other schools who accessed vocational courses. However, at the same time, the complexity of the student cohort has increased, resulting in a corresponding demand for students in targeted groups requiring additional and differentiated support.

During the presentation by the Principal, the Deputy and Senior Leaders, emphasis was placed on the following three goals:

Create, Inspire and Excel

1. Change the perception and image of the College to make us a real option for our local community.
2. Increase our Year 8 enrolments every year by 20% for the next 3 years and,
3. Make our curriculum so engaging, exciting and future-oriented that our students and their families are our best sales people.

The 2016 focus for the school was described as Music, Sport and Recreation, and Hospitality, with a curriculum focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). However, the school focus is not shared by students, parents or the staff.

Students felt connected with the school and acknowledged the efforts of the staff to support their emotional wellbeing and learning. They enjoyed what they described as 'hands-on learning' such as the Cheltenham Exchange, Music Under the Stars and Sport. Parents liked the 'smallness' of the school, as they believed it allowed greater personalisation of learning. They described the new focus on becoming an academic school as unrealistic, and placed greater emphasis on the ability of the school to cater for the current cohort of students. The staff echoed these beliefs, whilst some appeared annoyed with the focus on increasing enrolments and would prefer a focus on teaching and learning.

The Review Panel could not determine the school values, focus, and strategic directions, as they were presented with conflicting information, both verbally and in writing, by the Principal, the Leadership Team and staff. Conflicting accounts were also given as to the process used to create the vision, ranging from a process using an external consultant through a collaborative process involving all staff to the 'Captain's Call', referring to a decision made by the Principal.

The leaders of curriculum and pedagogy reported a focus on inquiry-based learning, task design and interdisciplinary approaches. However, again, there was no common vision or consistent belief about what this would look like in practice, nor the process used to achieve it.

The Review Panel believed that there was a genuine sense of loss expressed by all adults interviewed in relation to the Vocational Education focus of the school. The sense of optimism and the opportunity for renewal appeared missing.

The messages for change were framed in a deficit model, with a focus on declining student enrolments, financial resourcing issues and the increased complexity of the school. The feedback from the community indicates a preference to use the compelling argument of improving the learning outcomes of the current cohort of students by enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

The Review Panel believe that the staff would appreciate a clear, regularly communicated, crisp direction and focus for their work, led by a cohesive Leadership Team. There is a need for a positive approach, built collaboratively, that capitalises on the valued history of the school and focuses on the development of the skills and needs of the current students. The Review Panel believe that the school could draw on the strength of 'hands-on', experiential or vocational learning pedagogy, aim to stretch learners, and provide intellectual challenge by using inquiry-based or challenge-based techniques. Regardless, the vision needs to be student-centred and focused on learning.

The school could consider building onto the third goal outlined by the Principal in her address to the panel, as it referred to an engaging, exciting curriculum, ensuring that every student reaches their full potential.

Direction 1

Improve student achievement, by the leadership team developing a shared understanding of the vision for an interdisciplinary and inquiry approach to teaching and learning. This vision needs to be concisely and regularly communicated, implementation planned and used in decision-making.

Direction 2

Improve student engagement and growth in achievement of every student by exploring challenge and inquiry-based pedagogy.

How well does the school leadership facilitate the development of a collaborative culture?

The panel was interested in exploring how school leadership facilitated the development of a collaborative culture, particularly in reference to the quality of teaching and learning.

One of the focus areas for 2016 is STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). There appeared to be confusion regarding the leader, in addition to the Principal, who had the overall responsibility for curriculum. The Deputy has curriculum in his overall role statement, however, there are conflicting views held by the Principal, the Deputy and other leaders about who has this responsibility.

The curriculum leaders of Maths, Science and Technology appeared to have different levels of understanding about STEM and how it was going to be implemented. They described pockets of innovative teaching practice and STEM activities, including the Concept to Creation, Pedal Prix, Quad Competitions and Scale Electrics. However, they were unable to describe how they were going to lead an interdisciplinary approach, except that 20 staff had received STEM training from UniSA. One leader commented that there was a three year plan, but it appeared that the plan had not been developed in a collaborative manner, nor, in fact, shared with teaching staff or the Principal.

The confusion regarding the vision, leadership responsibility, planning and communication is mirrored in all aspects of school organisation. The Review Panel believe there are pockets of innovative teaching, but they are not developed, shared or owned by teams of teachers. Innovation and good practice appear to be reliant on teachers willing and able to take on this challenge, rather than a commitment and implementation by all. This has resulted in limited success to develop a whole-school approach or coherent curriculum for learners.

The meeting structure and use of meeting times appear to be largely operational. Teachers report that Learning Area time is spent on organisational matters and debriefing about behaviour issues, or the increasing complexity of classes. A common theme is the number of students on individual plans, due to learning difficulties, or at-risk due to other causes.

Communication between teams and individual staff members also appears to lack cohesion. For example, the Middle School Team and Senior School Team were not able to describe each other's work and improvement agendas.

Direction 3

The Leadership Team will develop common agreements in relation to the College's teaching and learning vision and works together in a coherent manner to implement the vision.

Although, the panel recognises that they did not interview every teacher or student, or visit every class, they formed the opinion that students were compliant and well-behaved. The teachers were interacting positively with the students and showed a genuine interest in them and their learning. Some students, however, were disengaged and reported that they did not feel challenged or stretched in their learning.

There appeared to be a culture of blame and abdicating responsibility for the outcomes and the culture of the school by many of the staff. Many blame each other, and wrongly believe it is only the Principal who has the right to challenge those staff members who are not supporting the direction and procedures of the school. Every staff member in the school is responsible for the outcomes of the students at the College and, therefore, needs to accept this responsibility and work in a more collegiate manner. 2016 is an opportunity for the staff teams to stand together in their common purpose of improving the learning outcomes of all students regardless of their background or personal circumstances. For the school to achieve this goal and be sustainable, the staff must unite and support the new direction of the school.

The Review Team wondered whether the school would benefit from the exploration of the use of interdisciplinary teams to plan, develop and share pedagogical approaches in favour of learning areas; for example, the STEM team (Consisting of teachers of Maths, Science and Technology) as an interdisciplinary team.

Direction 4

Increase the focus on improving student achievement by the review and implementation of the leadership roles, team structure and purpose, and the meeting structure to facilitate an increased collaboration, communication, and ownership of the vision for teaching and learning.

What is the extent and quality of data and information the school has about student achievement and growth and how effectively is it used?

The panel noted that the achievement of students and the school is commonly reported in terms of enrolment numbers, program numbers, or participant numbers, rather than learning outcomes. The Review Panel wondered if this was due to the high level of students in priority groups, or that the school was performing at a level significantly less than expected of a school in a comparable context.

The school's membership of NESP (North Eastern Secondary Principals) group has seen an increased focus by middle managers to use data to inform pedagogy. The panel believed that this process was developing, as little evidence was seen of this in terms of Learning Area teams, with the exception of deciding appropriate Vocational Course offerings. The opinion of some staff members indicated that there has been a focus on collecting data, but they are unsure what it is used for. The Senior Leader, Middle School, shared some data regarding NAPLAN, PAT-R and PAT-M with the Review Team. Data in these areas is shared with teachers to inform differentiation of task design. In general, however, leaders could not articulate the use of data to drive leadership and improvement.

The Review Team was interested in exploring the school's focus on 'every student every day', in particular, the effectiveness of the tracking and monitoring systems in place. The Assistant Principal, Senior School, uses the tracking system to monitor individual student achievement. Students refer to the 'traffic lights' as an indication of achievement levels throughout the SACE. Some individual tracking is kept by members of the Student Support Team to aid them in their own work of supporting students. The data identified the classification of students and the name of the Case Manager. Confidential case notes are kept on individual students by the Counsellor. Attendance data is actively monitored by the members of the Student Support Team. When interviewed, the Student Services Team presented an account of the volume of student behaviour issues they dealt with on a daily basis. Whilst many individuals in the team appeared to track particular data, it appears that there are no agreed to and consistent approaches to tracking and monitoring students, or measuring the positive impact of this group on student learning outcomes.

A group of staff reported their attempts of designing tasks to meet the complex needs of students in their classes and their inability to see the results of their efforts. They demonstrated a genuine desire to improve the wellbeing outcomes of their students and appear to be experiencing difficulties in engaging and designing learning activities to improve the outcomes of some students.

The students and staff would benefit from the use of growth data and common tracking and monitoring procedures so that achievements could be acknowledged and areas of improvement could be identified and actioned. Students and staff could work together to ensure that all children achieve their personal best and their growth is celebrated.

Direction 5

Student achievement and growth can be identified and celebrated by the development and use of a process to put 'the faces on the data' (personalise the data), so that teachers can work together to differentiate the learning and celebrate the growth in student learning.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Windsor Gardens Secondary College is experiencing challenges while undergoing significant change as it transitions from a vocational focus. 2016 is an opportunity to redefine and reshape the College, and lead the school community into a positive and exciting future, which builds on the College's vocational background.

The school would benefit from the support required of the one year review process.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following Directions:

1. Improve student achievement, by the leadership team developing a shared understanding of the vision for an interdisciplinary and inquiry approach to teaching and learning. This vision needs to be concisely and regularly communicated, implementation planned and used in decision-making.
2. Improve student engagement and growth in achievement of every student by exploring challenge and inquiry-based pedagogy.
3. The Leadership Team will develop common agreements in relation to the College's teaching and learning vision.
4. Increase the focus on improving student achievement by the review and implementation of the leadership roles, team structure and purpose, and the meeting structure to facilitate an increased collaboration, communication, and ownership of the vision for teaching and learning.
5. Student achievement and growth can be identified and celebrated by the development and use of a process to put 'the faces on the data' (personalise the data), so that teachers can work together to differentiate the learning and celebrate the growth in student learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Windsor Gardens Secondary College will be externally reviewed again in 2017.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.

Paulette Sargent
PRINCIPAL
WINDSOR GARDENS SECONDARY
COLLEGE

Governing Council Chairperson